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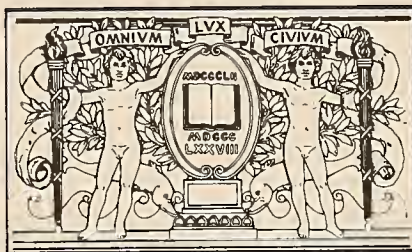
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THE REPORT ON

THE SURVEY OF ST. JOSEPH'S RESIDENTS

By

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for

Project Technology, Race & Poverty

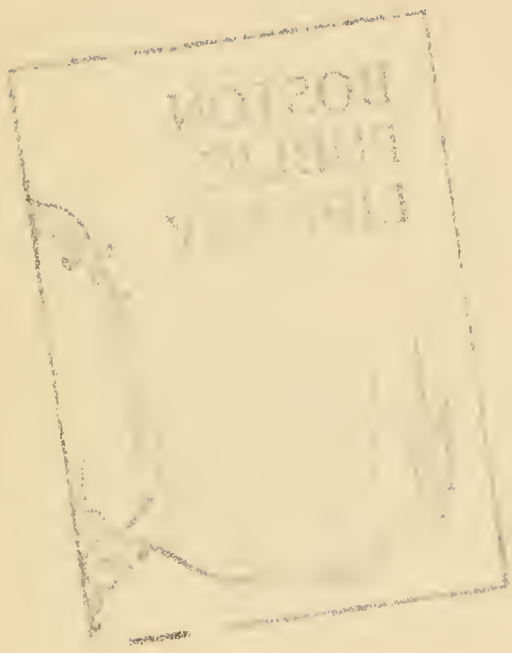
The Urban Systems Laboratory

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Cambridge, Massachusetts

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Stephen D. ...
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THE SETTING AND THE DEVELOPMENT

St. Joseph's Homes, Inc. is a low-income housing development organized on a cooperative basis. Located just off Washington Street in Roxbury, the development consists of 136 housing units in twenty-five separate two-story buildings, most of which are arranged around vaguely defined courts. The project was sponsored by St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, and the actual church building as well as the affiliated children's school are located within the project. Paul Feloney of the Cambridge architectural firm of Feloney and Sturgis designed the housing, and the Development Corporation of America (DCA) developed the site and now manages the project.

Applications for residence opened on April 1, 1969, and a five-member committee including management, social agency, and community representatives spent several months choosing the tenants from the original pool of 1200 applicants. The tenants paid a \$200 subscription fee upon moving into the project, and they continue to pay a monthly sum, ranging from \$105 to \$175 for units containing from one to five bedrooms, which goes towards paying off the project's mortgage and covering management costs. 51 of the 136 housing units, including all of the four- and five-bedroom units and some of the three-bedroom units, are inhabited by public housing tenants who receive rent supplements to cover the difference between about 23 percent of their income and the rent. Like the other residents of St. Joseph's, the public housing tenants are building up an equity and will eventually own their full share of the development.



THE SETTING AND THE DEVELOPMENT (cont.)

The cooperative structure influences more than just the financial aspect of the project. The development is governed by a Board of Directors which consists of eleven St. Joseph's residents elected annually by the other residents. Each Board member is responsible for eleven or twelve specific families who communicate their complaints and their suggestions to their assigned representative, and the Board in turn passes on the information to the DCA management and also legislates rules governing activities within the community.¹

There are six types of housing units in St. Joseph's, including apartments with from one to five bedrooms as well as special three-bedroom split-level apartments. Each unit is two stories high, except the one-bedroom units, which are single-level flats resting one above another. Every unit has a fenced back yard except the second-story one-bedroom units, which have a fire escape that serves as a balcony, and all of the other units also have an unfenced front yard and a wooden stoop with a couple of steps leading up to the front door. Each unit has its own entrance. The houses are built of wood and brick, and they are strung together in blocks of four to ten units with every second shared wall being an extra-thick fire wall.

Within each unit the apartments are arranged with the kitchen in front and the living room in back, leading out through sliding glass doors to the back yard. The kitchens face onto the communal front areas with long, vertical windows that nearly reach the floor.

¹For a more detailed description of the project's history, the physical appearance of the site, and the cooperative structure, see the report on St. Joseph's by Portia Smith, et.al. For further information on tenant selection, see the paper by Ivory Woods.



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THE SETTING AND THE DEVELOPMENT (cont.)

All of the bedrooms are located on the second floor (except, of course, in the one-bedroom units), and so is the bathroom, except when there is more than one. (The four-bedroom units have one-and-a-half bathrooms, and the five-bedroom units have two.) In the one- and two-bedroom units the kitchen is relatively small, with the dining room incorporated into the living room, but in the larger units the kitchen and dining areas are combined to form one big room. All kitchens are equipped with appliances, including a garbage disposal, but only the three-, four-, and five-bedroom units have space in the kitchen for a washing machine and dryer. (The units do not come equipped with these, and there is a central laundry room located within the development.) Only the three- and four-bedroom units (not the split-levels) have a basement, which comes unfinished. The three-bedroom split-levels differ from the other units in that they have an entry hall, separated by a short wall from the kitchen. Stairs lead up from the kitchen to the living room, a half floor above, which overlooks the kitchen with a balcony and also leads into the back yard. The third half-level contains one bedroom and the bathroom, while the top floor has the remaining two bedrooms.²

²See individual floor plans for more details.

INTRODUCTION

In collecting information on the housing preferences of low-income people as part of a project to develop new housing in Highland Park, we chose to survey the residents of St. Joseph's for a number of reasons. In contrast to the relatively old housing in Highland Park, where a previous survey had been conducted, St. Joseph's was only about two years old. It was pointed out by architect Tunney Lee that reactions of occupants of recently built housing would be of greater value to the designer than would be the reactions of Highland Park residents to their dwellings, many nearly a century old. Since the older housing cannot be replicated, using it as a basis for comparison has distinct limitations. Another advantage of using St. Joseph's as a referent is that objective data (room dimensions, floor plans, etc.) are available and respondents' evaluations of the units can be interpreted in terms of the objective information.

St. Joseph's seemed to be the most successful of the recently built projects in Roxbury. More Highland Park respondents said that they would like to live in St. Joseph's than in any of the other low-income projects. We hoped that by interviewing people who lived in new housing we could eliminate most of the references to poor condition, which dominated the Highland Park responses, and get some information on what people thought of the actual design of their homes. If St. Joseph's was indeed a successful community, we could also take into consideration the positive as well as the negative

INTRODUCTION (cont.)

aspects brought out by the survey. By comparing the responses on space needs, room arrangement, and other specific matters to the architect's floorplans, we hoped to get a more exact idea of the people's preferences than we had been able to get from the Highland Park questionnaires, for which we had no preliminary information on the respondents' current housing. In addition, St. Joseph's offered us an opportunity to study the effects of a cooperative ownership system on the residents' attitudes toward their housing. Since the St. Joseph's residents had been selected from a pool of applicants roughly similar in income, race, and other demographic characteristics to the Highland Park population, we assumed that their opinions would help us understand the needs of the tenant population for whom the new housing would be built.

THE ARCHITECT AND THE MANAGER: THEIR VIEWPOINTS

Before setting to work on the St. Joseph's questionnaire, we interviewed both the project's architect, Paul Feloney, and the DCA manager, Loring Smith. Feloney considered the project a success and opened the conversation by asking why no one had copied it yet. His main intention in designing the housing, he said, had been to give a feeling of space and openness by leaving a clear view from the front all the way through to the back, and also to create a design which was flexible enough to fit a number of different needs. He considered the three-bedroom split-level unit the most successful dwelling in the development. He described his general approach as "unsystematic," and he mentioned that he had used sliding glass doors (which have turned out to be a tremendous security problem) because he could not really think of anything else to use. He said that he had tried to take account of user needs in a "negative way, by avoiding our own personal tastes, trying to project ourselves into the situation that people like that are in."

Loring Smith, when asked to comment on the design of the project, objected primarily to the landscaping. He felt that garden apartments were inappropriate for families who had never learned how to take care of grass areas, and he would have preferred large paved areas with small protected plots of grass. He mentioned the security problem brought on by the glass doors and long glass windows, which caused most people to spend over \$100 for security gratings. He thought

THE ARCHITECT AND THE MANAGER: THEIR VIEWPOINTS (cont.)

that people liked living in St. Joseph's, mentioning that all of the units were full, that there was even a waiting list, and that only about five of the original 136 families had moved out in two years. He said that the careful selection process had resulted in only about six "rotten apples," and that only two people had been evicted for non-payment of rent.³ He was skeptical about the idea of St. Joseph's being a community, since he thought the residents cared more for family privacy than neighborhood communication, and although he listed some of the Board of Directors' achievements in enacting residents' wishes, he also mentioned the Board's recent leadership problems and the lack of participation in annual Board elections, seeming to minimize the importance of the non-financial aspects of the cooperative structure.

³ Rent is collected by mail, so that St. Joseph's residents receive a monthly bill like a telephone company bill and merely send their payment back by mail. DCA regularly issues summonses for failure to pay on time, but actual eviction is rarely necessary.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

In our first direct contact with the St. Joseph's residents, we met with Mrs. Eileen Kline, the President of the Board of Directors and a participant in the planning of St. Joseph's since its beginning. She showed us over her three-bedroom split-level apartment, answered our general questions on how she felt about her home and the community, and recommended other St. Joseph's residents for us to talk to. The next evening we conducted the same sort of informal interview with Mrs. Wilkey, the resident of a five-bedroom apartment in a different section from Mrs. Kline's. We then held an informal meeting between the three architects from our Highland Park project and the five St. Joseph's residents, including Mrs. Kline, who were to conduct the interviews in our survey of St. Joseph's. Of four other interviewers, three were women with children (Mrs. Ferrar, Mrs. Moore, and Mrs. Talbert) and one was a man (Mr. Saunders). All except Mrs. Talbert were members of the Board of Directors.

The information that emerged from the two initial interviews and the group meeting was extremely consistent. We got a general feeling of satisfaction with St. Joseph's, especially in comparison to previous housing and to other low-income housing projects. The main advantage seemed to be the resemblance of the housing to single-family dwellings, with the separate entrances and the private back yards. The main complaint was the security problem caused by the glass doors and long front windows. While they explicitly emphasized the advantages in terms of

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE (cont.)

privacy, we got the feeling that St. Joseph's is very definitely a community, where people know their neighbors and sit out on the front stoops talking in the evenings. We also got a much stronger impression of the Board's influence than we had received from Mr. Smith, although it must be remembered that we were speaking mainly to Board members.

Using the ideas and information we had gained from the discussions with the residents, we put together an interview form which included questions on the interiors of the houses, the outdoor areas, and the community as a whole. From a list of all of the St. Joseph's residents we selected at random a sample of thirty households, representing proportionally the number of units of each type in the development. We then met again with the interviewers, asked them for their advice on the content of the questionnaire and the wording of the questions (only a few minor changes were made), and divided up the interviewees among them, taking care to match up the Board members with the families they officially represented. We held one more training session with the interviewers to go over the interview technique, although most of them had conducted interviews before. The survey itself took place during the second and third weeks of August, 1971, and by August 20 all of the questionnaires were complete.

The interviewers were each paid fifteen dollars per training session and ten dollars for each completed questionnaire, while the interview respondents received no compensation. This was on the advice of the interviewers, who felt that the offer of money might prejudice the answers, would possibly embarrass the respondents, and in any case would be unnecessary as an incentive to participate

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE (cont.)

in the survey. When the interviewers conducted the interviews, they first explained to the respondents that the results would be used to design even better housing than St. Joseph's for people living in Highland Park, and the result was a 100% response. We attribute the high rate of participation, especially surprising in comparison to the 50% response on the Highland Park survey, to a number of factors, including the use of resident interviewers; the previous organization of the St. Joseph's community under the cooperative system; the interviewers' participation in developing the questionnaire, which gave them a greater understanding of its purpose and a greater ability to convey the purpose to the respondents; and possibly (although this is only conjectural), the relative comfort and success of the St. Joseph's development itself, which gave the interview respondents some faith in planners and architects, a desire to share the pride they feel for their community, and some degree of personal security from which to reach out and help others.

THE RESPONDENTS: WHO THEY ARE, WHERE THEY CAME FROM, WHAT THEY WANT

Of the thirty households that responded to the questionnaire, five had previously lived in public housing projects in Boston, thirteen were from elsewhere in Roxbury, six came from Dorchester, and the rest gave individual street names (which may or may not be in Roxbury) or sections of Boston as their former place of residence. None came from outside of Boston. The majority of the families (18) had lived in apartment buildings of four units or more, while almost all of the rest (10) had lived in two- or three-family houses. (Only one respondent answered "single-family dwelling," and since this person later stated that the advantage of St. Joseph's was "style of house" and that the family had moved because they wanted their own house, the person may merely have misunderstood the question.)

Family size varied with the unit size, as expected. All three one-bedroom units were inhabited by single, childless individuals. Two-bedroom units had from two to five inhabitants, with three-member families in most of them. The three-bedroom split-levels tended to hold more people than the regular three-bedroom units, averaging between four and five inhabitants rather than four. The four-bedroom units generally held six or seven people, while of the two five-bedroom units in the sample, one housed ten people and the other thirteen. The number of children in each family ranged from one (in some of the two- and three-bedroom units) to eleven (in one of the five-bedroom units), with the average at around three or four. The majority of

THE RESPONDENTS: WHO THEY ARE, WHERE THEY CAME FROM, WHAT THEY WANT (cont.)

the families (18), spread throughout the different unit sizes, had children under five years of age, but while in the two-bedroom units there were more families with young children (7) than with children over five (6), the larger units had as many families with pre-teens (ages 6-10) or with teens (ages 11-18) as with very young children. This merely represents the expected division in terms of stages in the family life-cycle, the younger families with fewer and smaller children inhabiting the smaller units, while the older families with more children of various ages live in the larger units.

When asked why they moved to St. Joseph's, the largest number of respondents (15) answered simply that they were looking for better conditions, including better housing and a better environment. In the three, four, and five-bedroom units, several people had moved because they needed more room. Other reasons given included the necessity of leaving the old place, the newness of St. Joseph's and its convenience in terms of maintenance, the availability of rent subsidies, health reasons, the desire for a single-family house with a private yard and private entrance, and the wish "to better myself." Asked what they liked about living in St. Joseph's, the respondents commented first on the privacy of the individual units, comparing them to one-family houses and praising the enclosed yards. They were also happy about having more room and newer housing than they had previously had, living in a nice, quiet, conveniently located neighborhood with congenial neighbors, and getting financial benefits such as paid utilities and

THE RESPONDENTS: WHO THEY ARE, WHERE THEY CAME FROM, WHAT THEY WANT (cont.)

tax advantages. When asked what they disliked about St. Joseph's, many people (9) answered "nothing," while a larger number of complaints dealt with management or construction problems. The most common complaints in terms of design were the lack of soundproofing and the absence of a play area. People also complained about vandalism (2), incomplete fencing, insufficient closet space, the windows, the heating system, the excessive rent, the poor parking area, and the people overhead in the one-bedroom units.

At the end of the questionnaire, after considering each aspect of their housing and their community in detail, the respondents were asked to compare other low-cost housing projects to St. Joseph's. They were generally familiar with almost all of the other projects listed, and they overwhelmingly considered St. Joseph's a better place to live. The one dissenter commented that Marksdale, Charlayne, and Castle Square seemed sturdier in construction. Otherwise, people liked St. Joseph's better because it was prettier, newer, cleaner, in better condition, better maintained, and "planned for people to live privately with pride." They liked the privacy of a single-family unit, but they also considered the cooperative system and the friendly community important factors in making St. Joseph's what it was. One respondent explained the preference for St. Joseph's by saying that it was "quieter and a co-op -- they are projects."

Finally, the respondents were asked to rate the housing development on a scale from "excellent" to "very poor." The majority (18) gave a "good" rating, while five people rated it "fair" and four "excellent." Only three people said either "poor" or "very poor." Satisfaction was

THE RESPONDENTS: WHO THEY ARE, WHERE THEY CAME FROM, WHAT THEY WANT (cont.)

greatest among the respondents living in the three-bedroom split-level units, half of whom said "excellent" and the other half "good." Among the two-bedroom units, more people said "fair" than "good," and these accounted for two out of the three negative responses. On the whole, therefore, St. Joseph's comes across as a highly satisfactory community, with the best features in the three-bedroom split-levels and the worst in the two-bedroom units.

A summary of the findings pertaining to specific rooms and arrangements is given in the sections which follow.

SECTION 1. ROOM ARRANGEMENT

Except for residents of two-bedroom units, there were very few respondents who disapprove of the arrangement of rooms. Five of the nine residents of two-bedroom units, however, report dissatisfaction with room arrangement. An examination of their reasons for dissatisfaction reveals that it is not merely the arrangement of rooms that is specified; rather, room size and access to rooms is at issue. For example, they complained that the living/dining area is too small or simply that they need larger rooms. Another respondent, bothered by access, said that she did not like entering into the kitchen. Only one person spoke of an aspect which deals with what was intended by "room arrangement." and that was an objection to the location of the bathroom. A more desirable location was not suggested.

We do not doubt that most of the residents of St. Joseph's are satisfied with the arrangement of rooms in their units. Indeed, if it were really disturbing they would have expressed their dissatisfaction in some way. However, we would be more certain about their understanding the term "room arrangement" if the responses of three participants had not included references to room size. In subsequent inquiries and discussions of room arrangement, examples, models,

SECTION 1. ROOM ARRANGEMENT (cont.)

and other visual materials should be used to ensure the respondents' understanding the concept.

When asked specifically about aspects of the arrangement, for example, whether they like having an "upstairs and a downstairs" and having bedrooms on the second floor, the meaning of the questions and their responses is clear. Affirmative responses about both features were given almost uniformly. Only one respondent objected to having two levels, while two indicated they would like a bedroom on the first floor.

In inquiring about the design of the entry hall, we used as an example the entry arrangement included in the three-bedroom split-levels. Those who occupy three-bedroom split-levels are satisfied with the arrangement. Several others, presumably acquainted with that type of entry, registered their approval of the design. A few, however, disapproved. Notable in this group are four respondents who live in four-bedroom units. The type of entry they would prefer was not ascertained. Too few clues to their preference were given in their elaborations on this item. In this regard, several respondents said that they would like the entry hall to open into the living room. Only four express a preference for an entry hall that leads into the kitchen. One respon-

SECTION 1. ROOM ARRANGEMENT (cont.)

dent suggested two entries, one opening into the kitchen and the other into the living room. Three others would prefer its leading into a hall. An entry hall designed in such a way as to increase the separation between the interior space and persons outside the unit is desirable to some who cite the need for "more privacy" when someone outside comes to the door. One of the people who did have an entry hall specifically praised it as an addition to privacy, mentioning that she could sit in her kitchen and remain unseen by people coming to the front door.

Responses to the question about having the front entrance into the kitchen/dining area and the back entrance into the living room were divided. Seven of the nine respondents occupying two-bedroom units do not like the arrangement, noting as to disadvantages having guests enter through the kitchen and the lack of privacy to which this contributes. Someone mentioned that clotheslines are near the living room suggesting that the proximity is undesirable. Those in other units stated that they do not like entering the living room from the yard or simply that the entrances should be reversed.

SECTION 1. ROOM ARRANGEMENT (cont.)

The respondents were divided evenly with regard to preferring a separate kitchen and dining room or having them combined. Those who would prefer separate rooms feel they would have more space, that it would be easier to keep them clean, and that separate rooms would afford more privacy. Those inclined toward having a combined kitchen-dining room state that this arrangement is more convenient for serving, that the arrangement would mean having more space and that the rooms would be easier to keep in good order. This is a feature which is evaluated in terms of one's housekeeping pattern and experience.

Those who would like to be able to close off the kitchen from the dining area feel that it would make

⁴Actually, none of the St. Joseph's units have separate dining rooms. The dining areas are either incorporated into the kitchen or the living room. The question should have been worded so as to give merely those two choices, since the purpose of the question was to find out how people felt about the large kitchen/dining area found in the larger units, and whether they preferred that to the small kitchen and combined living/dining area in the one- and two-bedroom units. Instead, people answered the question without reference to their own apartments, as anybody might answer an abstract question about the hypothetical advantages of the location of the dining room. They tended to see a separate dining room as an additional room (justifiably so, considering the wording of the question) and therefore favored it as additional space, rather than as space taken out of some other room.

SECTION 1. ROOM ARRANGEMENT (cont.)

for a more attractive dining area, they would have --- --
more privacy and that the rooms would rather not
close off the kitchen say they would feel boxed in
or merely that it is unnecessary.

SECTION 2. THIS KITCHEN IS TOO SMALL. THIS KITCHEN
IS JUST RIGHT.

None of the respondents reported that his kitchen is too large. Almost half (14 -- several of whom live in two-bedroom units) feel their kitchens are too small. The rest stated that their kitchens are just the right size.

Those who find their kitchens too small would like to be able to accommodate other appliances (washer, dryer, freezer), more kitchen furniture, more cabinets and the like. It should be noted that nearly all of the respondents who regard their kitchens as too small also report that their families spend more time in the kitchen/dining area than they do in the living room. Their need for more kitchen space may reflect their need for more space for other family and individual activities.

There is general satisfaction with kitchen fixtures and features such as overhead lighting, ventilation and the garbage disposal. Dissatisfaction with the amount of cabinet space was expressed by those in two-bedroom and three-bedroom split-level units. They need additional storage space for dishes

SECTION 2. THIS KITCHEN IS TOO SMALL. THIS KITCHEN
IS JUST RIGHT. (cont.)

pots and pans, appliances and food stuffs. In addition, three residents of the two-bedroom units would be happier with a different arrangement of appliances. It was suggested, for example, that the refrigerator might have been placed next to the window and that they might have fitted them better into the available space. All other respondents, however, expressed satisfaction with the arrangement of appliances.

There is a considerable degree of dissatisfaction with the "long windows in the front" -- the kitchen windows. Their concerns are about safety (children can climb out) and security (intruders can climb in). Some of those concerned about these factors have had security gratings installed. A higher window or a picture window were suggested.

SECTION 3. THE LIVING ROOM: "WILL YOU COME INTO MY
PARLOR?..."

With the exception of five residents of two-bedroom units, our respondents reported that their living rooms are the right size. The five⁵ residents who do not have ample living room space need additional room to accommodate another piece of furniture or an appliance such as a television set or a stereo phonograph.

With regard to living room use, members of small families, i.e. those in one- and two-bedroom units, tend to spend more time in the living room than in the kitchen/dining area. (This may help qualify the frequently reported kitchen-centered activity pattern associated with low-income life styles.) One respondent (three-bedroom split-level occupant) reported that his living room is never used, while eight others reported infrequent ("seldom," "once a week") use. These householders use the living room almost exclusively "for company." Others who indicated more frequent use cited a variety of living room-based activities, among them watching TV, listening to records, reading, games and recreation as well as entertaining.

⁵Three of these respondents stated that their living rooms are frequently used.

SECTION 3. THE LIVING ROOM: "WILL YOU COME INTO MY
PARLOR?..." (cont.)

The possibility of closing off the living room from the other rooms is considerably more appealing to occupants of one-, two- and three-bedroom units than it is to others. Those who prefer closing off the living room stated that it would increase their feeling of privacy, contribute to the organization of home life and would be more attractive. Those who prefer not closing off the living room felt that the area seemed larger, more attractive and more accessible when open. (Some like their present arrangements with respect to being able to close off the living room. In some units one can close it off, while there is no door or sliding panel in other units.) One might infer that larger families have greater need for spaciousness and fewer privacy needs; however, we should examine family composition and learn more about differences in family life styles before formulating a conclusion here.

Also associated with unit size and type was satisfaction with living room conditions and appurtenances such as ventilation, lighting and the sliding glass doors. On the whole, residents in the three-, four- and five-bedroom units are satisfied with those features while reactions of

SECTION 3. THE LIVING ROOM: "WILL YOU COME INTO MY
PARLOR?..." (cont.)

respondents in one- and two-bedroom units are mixed; particularly with regard to overhead lights and living room doors. There were no suggestions about improving the lighting; however, several suggested that a "regular" or "wooden" door and a picture window would be more desirable than the sliding glass doors. Again expressed was a concern about the security-value of the glass doors.⁶

⁶ It has been suggested that where there are more people in the household, there is less concern about security since there is a greater likelihood that someone is at home more often.

SECTION 4. THE BATHROOM

Our initial question in this section concerns satisfaction with the number of bathrooms per unit. Four of the six respondents in three-bedroom split-level units need an additional bathroom or half bathroom. Most of the other respondents find their present arrangement satisfactory. More spacious bathrooms are a requirement of residents of the three-bedroom split-level units as well as some who live in two- and three-bedroom dwellings. One respondent (in a two-bedroom unit) said that there would be more space if the furnace were located elsewhere. An improved ventilation system was suggested by most residents of three-bedroom split-level units and by some living in two-, three- and five-bedroom units. Nearly all the respondents were satisfied with the overhead lighting in the bathroom and most were pleased with the arrangement of bathroom fixtures. Bathroom cabinet space seemed lacking, however. Several respondents, particularly in one-, two-, three-bedroom, and three-bedroom split-level dwellings, need additional cabinet space to store medicines, toilet articles and linens. (A linen closet was recommended by one-bedroom residents.)

SECTION 5: THE BEDROOMS

Family composition and family size determine bedroom requirements. Most respondents report that there are "enough bedrooms" for their family members. Among those who are dissatisfied are a couple with 3 children (ages 7 years, 4 years and 17 months) in a two-bedroom dwelling unit and a household of three adults and two children (8 years and 20 months old) living in a three-bedroom split-level unit. Larger households, for example a 10-member and a 13-member family in 5-bedroom units, report that they have enough bedrooms. (In the case of the 13-member family, a storage room is used to provide sleeping space for two children.) One might expect fewer expressions of dissatisfaction from larger families since fewer housing options are available to them and perhaps also because they have had to develop a higher level of adaptability to living arrangements because of their numbers. Only two respondents stated that as many as 3 persons shared one bedroom.

Although there is general satisfaction with the number of bedrooms per unit, several residents feel that the bedrooms are not large enough. Indeed, seven of the eight respondents occupying 2-bedroom units and half of those in larger (3-5-bedroom) units

SECTION 5: THE BEDROOMS (cont.)

need more spacious bedrooms to accomodate additional furniture and other possessions.

Bedroom closet space is inadequate for many respondents. Notable are two groups, those in one-bedroom and three-bedroom split-level units, who find their closet space satisfactory.

A majority of the respondents are satisfied with the overhead lights (20 out of 30) and ventilation (22 out of 30) in bedrooms. Nearly two-thirds of the sample find their bedrooms quiet enough. Most of those who do not live in 2-bedroom units which require fire walls on both sides according to some residents, in order to insure quiet.

SECTION 6: THE BASEMENTS

Virtually everybody who does not have a basement would like to have one and those who do have them are pleased that they do. Basements are used primarily for storage and laundry and secondarily as a playroom and for parties. Most of those who do not have basements indicate that they would use them for recreation; fewer people stated that they would use them for storage and laundry. The difference between the actual and the proposed uses of the basement may perhaps be attributed to the appearance of the basements. The builders left the basements unfinished, with exposed pipes, unpainted walls, concrete floors, and no heat. The architect's purpose in doing so was to allow each resident flexibility in determining the use of the basement and finishing it accordingly, but the result has been that many people, lacking the time or the money to do the finishing, have avoided using the basement as a room for activities because it is so ugly and uncomfortable and have instead used it merely for storage or laundry. Those who do not have basements, not faced with the reality of an unfinished room and probably picturing a fully finished basement, state that they would use the basement for recreation and other family activities. People who now possess basements have suggested the following improvements: enclose pipes,

SECTION 6: THE BASEMENTS (cont.)

install heating unit, provide additional electrical outlets, improve drainage and "complete" the basements. Such changes would allow them to use the basement for the activities which are considered desirable for those who do not have basements.

SECTION 7: THE LAUNDRY

Most respondents, especially in larger (3-5-bedroom) units, report that they do their laundry at home. In all, 7 persons use the laundromat in the development and one other goes to a laundromat outside St. Joseph's located on Washington Street.

The St. Joseph's laundry room is located on the first floor of a centrally located unit, the upper floor of which is used as the meeting room for the Board. The washers and dryers are operated by plastic tokens which may be purchased from the resident who lives next door to the laundry, and thus security problems in the laundry are cut down considerably. The laundry room is closed at night to prevent children from playing inside it. There has been little or no trouble with theft of clothes from the machines.

The problem of where to put the washing machine and dryer comes out in the responses of the one- and two-bedroom unit residents, seven out of eight of whom answered that they would rather keep the machines elsewhere from their present location. In the three-, four-, and five-bedroom units, where the architect has designed a place in the kitchen/dining area specifically for storage of the washer and dryer, only two out of the fourteen respondents would prefer to keep the machines somewhere else. The residents of the one- and two-bedroom units, most of

SECTION 7: THE LAUNDRY (cont.)

whom now keep their washing-machines in the kitchen or in a closet (one keeps it in the living room), would prefer to have them in a basement or in the kitchen (by which they probably mean a kitchen with allotted space, rather than the kitchen they now have. One respondent would like to keep the laundry equipment in the kitchen if the kitchen were located at the rear of the house.)

This problem in locating the laundry equipment is connected to the resident's whole attitude toward space in the apartment. By putting the washer and dryer in a room not designed to hold them, the residents of one- and two-bedroom units generally crowd out some of the furniture that should go into that room. The extra furniture (e.g., a dining room set which should fit in the kitchen) is then pushed into another room (e.g., the living room), with the result that both rooms seem too small. Thus a large number of the respondents in one- and two-bedroom units consider both their living room and their kitchen too small, while there is a very high correlation between the people who considered those rooms the right size and the people who do their laundry in the St. Joseph's laundry room rather than at home. The architect, who originally thought that space for laundry equipment storage would be a necessity only for larger families, now recognizes that he should have made that space allowance in all of the units.

SECTION 8: MISCELLANEOUS FEATURES

Nearly two-thirds of the respondents would like more closet space where they might store tools and appliances, linens, clothes and toys. Suggested locations for the additional closet vary with the specific need for closet space.

Most respondents indicated their satisfaction with such features as the heating system and location of outlets when asked about them in a general way. Even the question of satisfaction with doors and windows received affirmative replies from most interviewees when the context was not given. Only one subject reiterated that a "conventional" living room door would be more desirable, while a few others suggested sturdier doors and windows and better insulation. The implication is that more specific and meaningful data are ascertained in response to specific items with known context as the referent.

The majority of respondents (19) have added security gratings to their front windows or back doors, although only nine respondents report actually having had problems with security. Their suggestions for improving security in individual houses include putting extra locks on the doors, installing doorbells with intercoms, shortening the long windows in the kitchen, and eliminating the sliding glass doors in back.

SECTION 8: MISCELLANEOUS FEATURES (cont.)

Residents have also made other changes in their own housing related to comfort and convenience rather than to security, such as carpeting various rooms (living room, bedrooms, and, less frequently, the kitchen) and painting the walls. All walls were originally white, and some respondents (actually the interviewers) recommend either a darker color or a glossier type of paint as more appropriate to families with children. Those who have repainted their walls will have to pay to have them returned to their original color upon moving out. Only one respondent has finished the basement. Another has added shutters and wall-paneling, while a third has put up a mirror wall. In one of the houses we visited, the resident has covered the kitchen cabinets with brightly flowered paper.

When asked if they have any further complaints about their housing, other than those already covered in the questionnaire, the respondents are divided roughly in half (13 with complaints, 15 without). Those who have additional problems mention the small size of the unit or the yard (these are both two-bedroom units), the low water pressure, the location of the heating system (it is upstairs between the bedrooms -- a number of the interviewers also refer to this as a problem), and the tendency of the radiators to collapse. Two respondents

SECTION 8: MISCELLANEOUS FEATURES (cont.)

(located at opposite ends of the development, one in a five-bedroom unit) criticize the cheap materials used in construction, and one of these two also complains about maintenance and landscaping.

SECTION 9: PREFERRED HOUSING STYLE

Many of the respondents misunderstood the preference question which asked them to choose among a stacked duplex, a single-level apartment, and a row house. An explanatory note on the questionnaire described the stacked duplex as being "like the one-bedroom apartments here," and relatively few mistakes were made in this category, but no doubt the respondents were unsure about the type of housing defined by the other labels. For example, almost all of the people who express a preference for a single-level apartment also state earlier in the questionnaire that they like the upstairs/downstairs arrangement. The majority of the respondents, despite the misunderstandings, say that they prefer row houses, their current style of housing. The major reasons for this preference is the greater privacy of the arrangement and its resemblance to single-family housing (with "no one overhead -- like a house"). Respondents also feel that row housing is more attractive, more spacious, more secure, and better because "my child likes it." One resident of a four-bedroom unit expresses an explicit preference for a split-level apartment, while another seems to favor completely detached houses ("Do not want to be attached to others."). Although the responses appear to show general satisfaction with the style of

SECTION 9: PREFERRED HOUSING STYLE (cont.)

housing as it exists now, the data would undoubtedly have been more accurate if pictures or explanatory descriptions had accompanied each label in order to make the choice between types more clear to the respondents.

In choosing between having their own entrance or sharing a common hallway, the St. Joseph's respondents unanimously favor a separate entrance. They give "more privacy" as the predominant reason, although a few also mention increased cleanliness and security, and one independent respondent favors "each responsible for own," a sentiment which may be implied in the preference for privacy.

An overwhelming number of respondents feel that their homes are more like single-family dwellings than apartments. The only three respondents who think of their units as apartments are a one-bedroom unit resident (this is understandable, considering the stacked arrangement) and two residents of two-bedroom units (both of whom are somewhat crowded, with three or four children in each family). The respondents' view of a row house unit as a single-family house is especially important in light of the preferences expressed by Highland Park residents for single-family dwellings. If the St. Joseph's arrangement can give the feeling of a house at less than

SECTION 9: PREFERRED HOUSING STYLE (cont.)

the cost of detached dwellings, it is definitely an achievement in terms of low-income housing. The response to this question may actually reveal something about density, since the respondents may be basing their impression of individual houses partly on the fact that St. Joseph's is less dense than most apartment complexes and more like a suburban development in that way. However, the absence of any accurate ways of conveying the idea of density to the respondents prevented us from checking this theory.

SECTION 10: ACTIVITIES

More than half of the respondents (18) spend more time in their kitchen/dining areas than in their living rooms, a trend which predominates in the three-, four-, and five-bedroom units. Of the thirteen who spend more time in their living rooms, eight live in the one- and two-bedroom units, where the kitchen is much smaller than in the larger units and does not include much space for sitting. All three of the respondents from one-bedroom units spend more time in their living rooms.

The frequency with which the St. Joseph's residents use their living rooms varies from "always" or "every day" to "never". Again, the residents of smaller units tend to use their living rooms more frequently, with nine out of twelve respondents answering that they use the room "always", "often", "every day", or "three-quarters of the time". In the larger units, only half of the respondents (9) use their living rooms with such frequency, while the other half give answers such as "occasionally", "seldom", "twice a week", "once a week", and "never". As can be seen from the quoted answers, it was extremely difficult to get a definite idea of the frequency of living room use, and the question would undoubtedly have been improved if worded in terms of number of hours rather than merely "how often". However, even these vague results show that in

SECTION 10: ACTIVITIES (cont.)

a sizable number of cases the living room is used infrequently, especially when the kitchen is large enough to provide a place for daily family activities.

Watching television is by far the leading activity in the living room, followed by entertaining or talking and then listening to music, records, or the radio. The proportion of respondents who use their living room for entertaining is much higher among the residents of the smaller units. Other living room activities include recreation (The children sometimes play here.), reading, studying, dancing, "nothing" (according to the resident of a three-bedroom split-level), and "everything" (a resident of a one-bedroom unit). In the kitchen, the primary activities are cooking and eating, with household chores coming next in the smaller units and entertaining or talking in the larger units. The only recreational activity listed by residents of one- and two-bedroom units (aside from two who answered that they entertained or talked in the kitchen) was card-playing, mentioned by three respondents. In the larger units, residents use their kitchens for cards and other games, watching television, hobbies and reading. Actually, the answers to the questions on specific activities may not give a completely accurate picture of the uses of each room, since the respondents may allow their impressions of the appropriate use for each room to color their memory

SECTION 10: ACTIVITIES (cont.)

of how it is really used. In a very minor attempt at participant observation (which would provide a more objective and possibly more accurate source of data than simple questions, if used on a larger scale), the interviewers noted on the questionnaires the rooms in which the interviews were held. This information generally bears out the impression given by the direct responses: while fully one-half of the interviews in the one- and two-bedroom units occurred in the living room, only four out of eighteen interviews in the larger units took place in the living room rather than the kitchen. Since the room arrangement is the same in both cases (the living room lies beyond the kitchen, and access to it therefore requires more than the minimum penetration into the house), the difference must be greatly due to the variation in the size of the kitchen, which is combined with a spacious dining area in the larger units.

Questions designed to reveal the limitations of housing on family activities yielded little information. Most respondents could not think of any activities that they had been unable to do in their former housing but could now do in St. Joseph's. A few said that they could now have better parties, relax better and have better recreation, or clean house more easily, while a number of respondents, predominantly in the two-bedroom units, referred to the benefits attached to a yard, such as sitting in the backyard, having picnics or cookouts, and cultivating a

SECTION 10: ACTIVITIES (cont.)

garden. When asked what kind of activities they would like to do that they could not do in their present home, the majority again answered "none" or "nothing". Those who did give suggestions tended to state what kind of room they would like (such as rec. room or play area, study room, den, utility area, and "basement area even for fiddling around") rather than listing specific activities. Under suggestions for changes in the apartment which would allow more activities, respondents only asked for two things: basements (especially in the two-bedroom units) and larger rooms.

The failure of questions may be due to several factors. For one thing, these people probably tend to think of their housing in terms of physical space rather than activities conducted in that space, and it is difficult during a brief interview to stimulate their imagination about activities they would like to do. This tendency may be aggravated in low-income people, who are used to thinking of housing as inflexible space which they must adapt to rather than space designed to fit their activities. Secondly, space needs may be automatically translated into specific structures; for instance, a resident who has no place to do carpentry work may say to himself, "I need a basement" rather than "I need a place to practice carpentry." Thirdly, (and connected to both the first two reasons), ideas for physical changes in housing can be gained by directly observing other

SECTION 10: ACTIVITIES (cont.)

houses and by either accepting or rejecting their concrete features ("I want a basement like the one in the four-bedroom units" or "I don't want an entry hall like the one in the three-bedroom split-levels"), while answering a question in terms of activities requires the respondent to consider patterns of his own life which he follows without thinking consciously about them.

SECTION 11: CHILDREN

According to their parents, the large majority of children in the two- and three-bedroom units spend less than two hours a day in their own bedrooms, aside from sleeping. In the four- and five-bedroom units, however, the children tend to spend more time in their own rooms. This is probably a function of age, since older children (more independent and therefore more likely to play alone in their rooms) live in the larger households while young children (who generally spend more time supervised by their mothers) predominate in the smaller units.

Not many children old enough to study live in the smaller units, but those who do study in their own room, the living room, the dining area, and the kitchen, with most in the kitchen or the dining area. In the larger units, the greatest number study in the kitchen/dining area, while the next most study in their own rooms and only in the two households do they study in the living room. This distribution may be largely a function of where there is a table on which to study.

In the smaller units, the children play either in their own bedrooms or the living room, with none playing in the kitchen. Children in larger units play about equally in their bedrooms, the living room, and the kitchen, with perhaps the fewest in the kitchen. The most frequently

SECTION 11: CHILDREN (cont.)

listed place for children's play is the basement, but this only holds true on the three- and four-bedroom units. Miscellaneous play places (each with only one response) are the parents' bedroom, a storage room, "upstairs", and "all over".

Parents are generally vague about where their children play when they play outdoors. Many answer simply "in front", "outside", or "in the neighborhood". Both older and younger children tend to play more frequently in front of the house than in the backyard. Special play places listed only for younger children include a totlot (Where? St. Joseph's doesn't have one.) and a Boys' Club, while only older children play in such places as a basketball court or the park (probably nearby Washington Park). In conversation with the interviewers, we gather that many mothers are hesitant to let their children go alone to the park because of the drug problem there.

SECTION 12: OUTDOORS

Backyard space varies with unit size. Not surprisingly, most residents in 3-5 bedrooms are satisfied with their yard space while approximately all those in smaller units are not satisfied with theirs. Improvements in yards suggested by occupants of 1- and 2-bedroom units include rearranging yard space, better fencing, enclosing yard completely (Each yard now has an open gateway with gate.), and enclosing trash and garbage disposal area. It was also suggested that grass be replanted. Those in larger units who expressed dissatisfaction prefer larger yards.

It was reported that backyards are used primarily for cook-outs. They are used less frequently for other activities such as hanging out laundry (except for larger units which have room for driers), gardening, play space, and watching TV. A few occupants of larger units report that they use the yards for entertaining. An occupant of a 1-bedroom unit reports that she does not use the yard at all because of lack of privacy. Activities that they wished their yards might accommodate include gardening, swimming pool, more play space and room for sitting out and relaxing. It should be noted that only a few residents listed desired activities they cannot carry out in their yards now.

SECTION 12: OUTDOORS (cont.)

Residents of smaller units are evenly split on the question of satisfaction with fencing. Only a few families in larger units are dissatisfied with fencing. Suggested changes are as follows: add gate to complete the fence, building the fence "flush with ground", and use of better materials. (One person expressed a desire for a white picket fence.)

When asked specifically about satisfaction with size of yard, many respondents indicated that the yards are not large enough for their needs. Desired increase in yard space ranged from "3 feet more" to "twice as large", with residents of smaller units expressing need for greater increases in yard space.

Most residents seem satisfied with location of trash cans, although they would prefer to have them enclosed in a shed. (Mrs. Klein said that one of the reasons St. Joseph's is better than other developments is because it does not have large trash disposal bins which attract rats and roaches.)

A balcony is not an acceptable substitute for yard space. Balconies would not afford the privacy, safety for children, room for gardening, cook-outs and so forth.

Yard space in front of the house is used for gardening, sitting out to talk with neighbors and to watch kids. In all, three householders report that they do not use front yard space. More than half of the residents would prefer having the front yard fenced to permit greater privacy,

SECTION 12: OUTDOORS (cont.)

protection and to give the appearance of a house. Those who do not want the front yards fenced feel that fencing would reduce the community feeling and give the development a jail-like quality.

Roughly half of the respondents are satisfied with their front stoops. Those who are not, suggest adding railings and enclosing the steps. People use their stoops for sitting out, talking with neighbors, and relaxing, especially in the evenings. When asked if they would prefer a larger front porch if it meant having a smaller back yard, an overwhelming majority responded "no". Their main reason is that it would afford less privacy. They also mentioned that they could not garden, need more space, back yard more important and simply that a porch is not a substitute.

Landscaping is not satisfactory in the eyes of more than half of the residents. They would like more grass, shrubs and flowers, better soil and drainage.

SECTION 13: NEIGHBORHOOD & COMMUNITY

Relatively few people reported that they have friends within St. Joseph's. However, many respondents stated that they have casual acquaintances, with most people knowing one to five others and few knowing over fifteen, although one respondent said that he knew fifty to one-hundred and another knew "half the community". The majority of the sample reports having been inside at least three houses other than the respondent's own unit. Meetings provide the most common occasion for getting acquainted. The laundry room, contrary to expectations, does not serve as a meeting place for residents of larger units. Respondents report meeting people through recreational activities or just by "being sociable and friendly".

When asked whether they had a satisfactory gathering place, most respondents mentioned the church room. Gatherings of groups smaller than the whole community are held in people's homes.

About half of the respondents said that they would recognize a stranger coming into the development.

Except in the one-bedroom units, there was a marked preference for having the houses face each other as they do now rather than face the street. Reasons given for preferring this arrangement were that it seems more friendly, enables people to get to know each other, and promotes community feeling. One respondent who

SECTION 13: NEIGHBORHOOD & COMMUNITY (cont.)

wanted to face the street said the scenery would be better. Almost everybody in St. Joseph's preferred having the development open as it is now, rather than enclosed by a wall. Many felt that a wall would make St. Joseph's look like a concentration camp, a prison, or a project.

Asked if they would like to live in a different section, almost all of the respondents said no. The variety of reasons given suggests that people tended to find something to like about wherever they were.

In most instances, the respondents feel they have enough privacy from their neighbors. The few respondents who felt a lack of privacy mentioned the need for firewalls, which would provide greater auditory privacy.

There is a great deal of participation in community activities with meetings being the primary activity. Most reported attending the co-op membership meetings, and a substantial number voted in the annual Board of Directors election. The Christmas Party is a highly popular event, and a couple of people mentioned a Halloween Party, and a few played on the softball team. Only one respondent mentioned a church-related activity, which consisted of membership on the parent board of St. Joseph's School. It was interesting to note that very few of the respondents attended the church or had children at the St. Joseph's School.

SECTION 14: COOPERATIVE LIVING

About half of the respondents said they knew nothing about cooperatives before moving to St. Joseph's. Most of the others knew "a little" or "not much" and only four reported having previous knowledge of cooperatives, one because of living in one and one because of working with the Boston Redevelopment Authority.

The few people who did not cite any advantages of a co-op were people in smaller units. The advantages most frequently mentioned were tax benefits and other financial advantages. Some people valued not having to worry about maintenance. One person mentioned being able to "complain about shared grievances". In comparison to rental housing, the cooperative structure was considered superior because of the possibilities for eventual ownership and the opportunity for resident control. The few disadvantages cited are not really defects of cooperative living as such: people worried about receiving their full equity or expressed a preference for private ownership. One respondent, however, did complain about having to get the Board's permission in order to make any improvements.

Most people felt that St. Joseph' would not be the same kind of place to live in if it were built exactly the same way but if it were rental housing rather than cooperative. They felt that people living in rental housing would take less pride in their housing, would fail to make improvements, would reap no tax advantages, and

SECTION 14: COOPERATIVE LIVING (cont.)

would have less concern for the community in general.

Some felt that land values would drop in a non-cooperative development. Almost everybody believed that people who live in cooperatives tend to take better care of their housing, again for the same combination of financial and social reasons.

SECTION 15: FACILITIES & SERVICES

In response to a question about desired community facilities, a drugstore and a grocery store were spontaneously mentioned. When rank value was assigned to a list of possible facilities, a day care center came out on top, followed by a recreation room, a teen center and a crafts room, with a small store ranked at the bottom. More than half of the people preferred to have the store outside of the development rather than in St. Joseph's itself. If there were a shopping center nearby, most people would want it to contain a drugstore and a grocery store. Other desired services included a cleaners, a variety store, a clothing store, a medical center, a beauty or barber shop, and a bank.

